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C. B. Smith

LOOKING BACKWARD AND FORWARD - (Part I)

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A radio conversation among Dr. C. B. Smith, Gertrude L. Warren, Madge J. Reese, Charles E. Potter, Ray Turner, and Charles E. Sheffield, Office of Cooperative Extension Work, broadcast Saturday, November 6, 1937, in the National period, 4-H Club achievement day program, by the National Broadcasting Company and 85 associated radio stations.

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SALISBURY:

At the studio round table here in Washington, we have gathered in the same group of Federal leaders in 4-H Club work who presented the national 4-H report a year ago. They will bring us up to date on the main trends in the guidance and training of farm young people through the medium of the 4-H Clubs.

Again this year, we'll ask the Chief of the Office of Cooperative Extension Work for the United States Department of Agriculture to preside over our reporting session. 4-H Club members, Leaders, Friends, Dr. C. B. Smith.

SMITH:

Good afternoon -- or good morning, to the westerners in this audience. This national 4-H Achievement program is especially significant this year. It comes at the end of the greatest year in the history of 4-H Club work. The first estimates of the 1937 membership have been gathered by Miss Gertrude L. Warren of the Federal Department whose work extends over the whole country.

WARREN:

I'm happy to report, again this year, Doctor Smith, that 4-H Club membership has increased considerably. Last year was a banner year. The membership went well over 1 million rural boys and girls. This year it has gone even higher. The 1937 enrollment will probably closely approach if not pass the 1 million 400 thousand mark. More over, 20% or nearly 280,000 of this number are between the ages of 16 and 21.

SMITH:

Good. Good. How many rural homes are represented by these young people.

WARREN:

Probably 1 million or more.

SMITH:

Now let's go back for a moment to last year's record. Since the 1936 Achievement Day program the full record has been set down. And Mr. C. E. Potter, in charge of 4-H Club work in the Eastern States, has analyzed it and found out some interesting things about the ages of 4-H members. Mr. Potter...

POTTER:

Yes, Doctor Smith. I found that the average age at which boys and girls go into the Clubs is 12. Club members in 1936 constituted 44 percent of the rural young people who had reached the average starting age.

SMITH:

Nearly half of them.

POTTER:

Yes. Last year about a fifth of the 4-H Club members were from 16 to 20 years of age; two-fifths from 13 to 15; and two-fifths from 10 to 12. Girls outnumbered boys by about 3 to 2.

SMITH:

And most of the members were in school?

POTTER:

As you'd expect of persons between the ages of 10 and 20. But at that nearly 70 thousand of the members weren't in school.

SMITH:

We'll hope that more of them will be reached in 1938, and obtain at least some of the benefits of the 4-H program.

TURNER:

Before we leave the statistical section of the report, we might ask Potter to give us some facts about what sort of projects were undertaken by the majority of members.

SMITH:

A good idea, Ray.

POTTER:

A better idea would be for Ray to give that. I don't remember the figures very closely.

TURNER:

Of course you don't have to remember all the figures to give an answer in general terms.

POTTER:

No, that's right. The Club members go into the things that interest them most and that will train them best in the lines of work going forward on the home farm and in the community.

SHEFFIELD:

So.....

SMITH:

Says Mr. Charles Sheffield, representing the 4-H Club work in Southern States.....

SHEFFIELD:

Thanks for introducing me, Doctor Smith. I was just going to remark that naturally demonstrations in clothing, food preparation and nutrition would draw the largest enrollments. Because that line of work is going forward on every farm.....

POTTER:

Quite logical. As a matter of fact, the foods and nutrition program drew by far the largest enrollments in 1936 -- over 460 thousand farm girls.

SMITH:

Miss Reese looks as if she'd like to remark right here.....Miss Reese of the Western States section in our Office.....

REESE:

Doctor Smith knows I'd like to remind Mr. Potter that over 65 hundred boys were enrolled in foods and nutrition activities last year.

TURNER:

And Doctor Smith, Mr. Potter and myself can't be kidded about farm boys learning to plan meals in keeping with the dietary needs of the family and prepare the food in an appetizing way. We think it's a fine idea.

REESE:

As a matter of fact, so do I. I think it would be well if more boys learned about better food preparation and good nutrition.

TURNER:

That's all right. But Potter didn't get very far with his general review of the line of work that occupied most 4-H members last year.

POTTER:

Well, then, resuming..... As I recall it, the activities that enrolled more than 100 thousand girls were foods and nutrition, clothing, gardening, home health and sanitation, and home furnishings.

SMITH:

And the boys?

POTTER:

They have a wider range, because of the diversity of farming lines in this continent-wide country of ours. So you'd better list the boys' activities in which were enrolled 50 thousand or over.

SMITH:

Very well.

POTTER:

And those were field crops, meat animal growing, poultry growing, and gardening.

SHEFFIELD:

Each of which covers a lot of specific demonstrations. In crops you have corn clubs, wheat clubs, cotton clubs, tobacco clubs, and so on. All in keeping with the general extension community program.

TURNER:

Another point that might be made for Miss Reese's benefit is that over 7 thousand girls enrolled in crops demonstrations, over 10 thousand in growing meat animals.....

REESE:

Yes, I know. And over 7 thousand in dairy work. But of course the women and girls know how to do all kinds of interesting work around the farm homestead.

SMITH:

All of which makes very neatly one point we always must remember about 4-H Club work -- it is based upon the activities of the farm and the farm home as well as upon the needs and interests of the young people. And you cannot separate the farm from the farm home nor the farm home from the farm. That is the strength of farming, the thing which sets it apart from other occupations, and one of the things which makes maintaining a good standard of farm income and farm life so vital to the nation.

Now, before we adjourn this session we'll have just time, I think, to give you some general comments on the 1937 trends in 4-H farming and homemaking activities. We'll leave comment on trends in organization, programs, and that sort of thing, for the second round-table session. We'll start the project report with the East. What's new in that line in the older farming region, Mr. Potter?

POTTER:

I should say the striking new thing this year is the great increase in conservation programs. The boys are taking up enterprises of saving soil and stands of trees, and wild life, and then applying those methods. The girls -- and the boys, too, Miss Reese -- are studying how to beautify the home grounds and then carrying through programs of planting and grading and seeding.

SMITH:

Now about the Central States, Mr. Turner?

TURNER:

Conservation is the greatest single new line of work there. Some States, where preservation of wild life is important to the income of farm families, have instituted activities in this line. Also, the shortage of farm workstock has led to an increase in raising such stock.

SMITH:

The farm and home demonstrations, again, grow out of the needs of the people. And in the South too, Mr. Sheffield?

SHEFFIELD:

Decidedly, Dr. Smith. The same shortage of work stock Ray Turner referred to as existing in the Central States is present in the South. That leads to new lines of 4-H Club work. In fact, this year, 4-H young people in Georgia bought a thousand brood mares.

Conservation is a southern watchword, too. Here are a couple of examples: In Lauderdale County, Alabama, 400 Club boys have seeded clover on their home farms to protect the soil through the winter. It will be plowed under next spring to enrich the soil. These are definite, worthwhile conservation enterprises. In Tennessee one county, Madison, has 10 Clubs training their members in the use of the farm level, the instrument used in laying off farm terraces to help with erosion control.

SMITH:

The erosion problem being most acute in the Southern States with their friable soils, steep slopes, and open winters that give rainwater a 12-month attack on the land, the Southern States have progressed furthest in erosion control club work. How goes it in the West, Miss Reese?

REESE:

The same as in other sections. We have a few conservation clubs. But the boys are concentrating on livestock, now, as they should. It's one of the region's main farm resources. To illustrate your point, Dr. Smith, Oregon has nearly a thousand members in marketing projects. Oregon farmers have to ship most of their products thousands of miles to market. That means Oregon farm people just have to study marketing. So the 4-H members study marketing, too.

SALISBURY:

Well, Dr. Smith, I think you and your colleagues have made the point quite clear that the 4-H Club is organized around a farm or home activity that the family deals with every day; that members learn to do by doing; and that more members are learning to do more by doing this year than ever before. To fill in the picture now with the details of accomplishment State by State is the next step in this rural youth broadcast.

(State programs follow. National program resumes at 1:15 p.m.)

LOOKING BACKWARD AND FORWARD - (Part II)
Saturday, November 6, 1937.

SALISBURY:

Here we are, back in Washington again. During the part of this program dedicated to the State reports of 4-H achievement, this group here listened with admiration to the statements of progress made by Maryland 4-H Clubs and members. They were presented on the Farm and Home Hour station in Washington. But I know that each of you heard an equally inspiring report from your own or an adjacent State. Let's get back to Dr. Smith and Miss Warren, Miss Reese, Mr. Potter, Mr. Turner, and Mr. Sheffield and their reporting of the national trends in 4-H work.

Doctor Smith.

SMITH:

After joining listeners in their applause for the splendid state reports, we return to consideration of the national trends in Club work. We want to cover some of the new developments in organizing Clubs, and in the methods being followed. Ray Turner has always followed organization trends closely, so we'll call him to the stand first of all.

TURNER:

All right, Dr. Smith. From my observations in the Central States, I should say that these are the main trends:

First, the volunteer leaders everywhere are organizing county 4-H councils. These councils plan in a general way the program for the whole county. And that is the main reason why there are more members enrolled in more projects than ever before.

SMITH:

Democracy in 4-H work too. The boys and girls and the local leaders plan the local program. That's as it should be. By the way, Miss Warren, in your statistical report, you forgot to tell us whether the increased number of members had been matched by an increased number of leaders.

WARREN:

It has. The first reports indicate about 10 thousand more local leaders this year than last year. A large number of these are former 4-H club members. In all, over 130,000 men and women, during 1937, have given freely of their time because they have faith in the 4-H Club program for rural youth.

SMITH:

Good. Now, Ray, proceed please with your report on new things in Club organization in the Central States.

TURNER:

Well, not only have the leaders organized for planning. They are organizing for training. In the typical county of the middle west there will be three or four conferences a year where leaders may learn about new methods of

conducting 4-H club programs as well as about new things in science and economics that can reenforce the work of their clubs. Recently the State Club staffs have been holding inter-State meetings. State leaders from four or more States are now getting together at some central point. It all makes for a more rapid spread of new ideas and methods.

SMITH:

Next let's hear from the East. Charles Potter.

POTTER:

Everything Ray said goes for the East, too. I'd add that in some States club members are organizing junior councils. The members of these councils are officers of local clubs. Through such councils the members help plan the county program.

TURNER:

That's true in our section, too. Forgot to mention it.

SMITH:

I think the development is general. In fact, I understand that there are some county junior councils in around 30 states. Now let's hear from the South. Mr. Sheffield.

SHEFFIELD:

Ray and Charles have described the general trend for us. I'd like to add a note on the progress of 4-H Club work in Puerto Rico. The first Clubs were organized there only two years ago. This year there are 80 Clubs of girls with 1200 members. In six places, perhaps even more, the local people heard about the Clubs, and called in the county agents to organize them. As an example of individual achievement in these youngest 4-H clubs, I'd like to tell you about Herminio Marrero.

SMITH:

Please do.

SHEFFIELD:

Herminio lives on a 12-acre mountain farm. You can understand that land was scarce with that farm supporting a large family. So Herminio's demonstrations were on tiny acreages. But on two tenths of an acre he produced plantains and yams worth over \$62.

On a tenth of an acre planted to yams he harvested a crop that returned \$30 above cash expense. But his personal profit wasn't the biggest result of Herminio's Club demonstrations. His father and most of the neighbors had quit growing plantains because of the damage done by the banana weevil. But under the demonstration instructions Herminio kept down the weevil by treating with hot water. Seeing how to control the insect, Herminio's father and three neighbors are growing plantains again this year.

SMITH:

"How far the little candle throws its beam....."

Well, Miss Reese, the Western report.

REESE:

I should tell an Hawaiian story to match Mr. Sheffield's Puerto Rican one. As to organization: the things that have been said about the other sections apply generally in the West including Hawaii and Alaska. It's really amazing to see how new ideas -- if they're good -- spread across this continent of ours both from the East and the West.

SMITH:

Yes, it is.

REESE:

I might add to what the others said that in the West all the State agricultural colleges now have organizations of former 4-H members. I know that's true elsewhere.

TURNER:

Yes, indeed. And it's easy to understand in our section. Over a third of the students enrolled in agriculture and home economics this year were former 4-Hers.

POTTER:

I think that's just about the general figure for the United States. As a footnote I might add that two 4-H Club houses are now on the campus at one eastern agricultural school -- Massachusetts State College at Amherst.

SHEFFIELD:

University of Georgia established a 4-H Club home for girls this year and the Florida State College for Women a Club for former 4-H Club members.

WARREN:

So it goes. Well, these reports from the sections confirm my observation that the trends in organization are toward better functioning of the 4-H Clubs as an integral part of the general community extension program, more conferring together by the local leaders and the member officers in county 4-H councils, better and more extensive training of leaders in all lines of endeavor, more services rendered by college groups of former 4-H members who have gone on to institutions of higher education, more organized work in helping all 4-H young people to serve in their own local communities and also more organized work in those activities such as recreation, music and art that enlarge the viewpoint and enrich the lives of young and old alike.

SMITH:

Good summary, Miss Warren, I was just going to ask you to do us that service. Now about the changes and improvements in the programs of the clubs, aside from their projects. How does that go in the West, Miss Reese?

REESE:

If I tell the whole story there won't be anything new to add when you get back East again. Well, more emphasis, I should say, on helping the individual member guard and improve his health. I mean, the trend is to help each member analyze health defects and eliminate them. Then, the trend is toward more aids for recreation. More 4-H camps. More closely organized and better instructed drama groups and musical organizations of the members themselves. More information for the girls on how to meet the problems of the modern consumer -- how to buy so as to get the best quality for one's dollar. Maybe Mr. Potter would like to go on from there.

POTTER:

You've covered a lot of the ground, Miss Reese. I want to add one thing. Namely, that there has been a great deal of progress made in finding the needs, the interests and developing programs for young folks just beyond the 4-H age, but who haven't yet established themselves on farms and started to take part in the adult organizations.

TURNER:

I should have mentioned that trend for the Central States, too, Charles. And I would emphasize the progress in forming musical groups of the members themselves, and in teaching appreciation of music.

WARREN:

You should, Mr. Turner, with all your years of experience in the National 4-H music hour.

SHEFFIELD:

If I may, I'd like to add two comments here on the progress of 4-H Club work in the South.

SMITH:

Go right ahead, Charles.

SHEFFIELD:

One comment is that the 4-H club programs have been arranged to be of service to the lower-income families of our section. The proof of this lies in the fact that in Arkansas, for example, more than half of the 60 thousand 4-H Club members come from tenant and sharecropper families.

My other comment is that the 4-H Club program is proving well adapted to the needs of Negro families. Negro 4-H Club enrollment in the Southern States increased by 20 thousand this year.

SMITH:

Those are important observations.

SALISBURY:

Dr. Smith, I wonder if you wouldn't give us now a summary of the year's progress and some comment on its meaning to the welfare of rural -- and of urban -- America.

SMITH:

Friends, everywhere:

You have just been listening to some of the high lights in the achievement records of 4-H Club members from a national standpoint. You have been told that 1937 stands as the great year in the history of the 4-H Club movement which is today reaching in its influence around the world.

In summarizing the results of 4-H club work for 1937, we would call attention again to the fact that any rural boy or girl anywhere in the United States, whether living on the farm or in the smaller towns, can join a 4-H club and secure the advantages of its training and fellowship. The price of membership is the doing of some worthwhile piece of real work on the farm or in the home under the direction of a club leader, and doing it in a better way.

You can find out more about these clubs in your neighborhood by getting in touch with your county extension agents, who usually have headquarters at the county court house, or by writing to your State extension director at your State agricultural college.

We would recall in closing, too, that it is not play training but real training that each boy and girl gets in 4-H Club work. It's real training when you drive a team and plow the land, plant corn or cotton, fertilize and cultivate the crop, harvest and feed or market the product, make some money, put it in the bank, or buy some needed thing for family or personal use.

It's real training when a girl grows a garden, gathers and sells her fresh vegetables or fruit, cans the surplus, and learns how to prepare the product for the table and fit it into the family diet.

It's real training when a boy raises a litter of pigs to maturity, keeps them free from disease, feeds them for economical growth, keeps a record of costs, learns how to judge pigs, makes an exhibit at the county, State, or regional fair, and carries off the blue ribbon.

It's real training when you take part in a club meeting, conducted in accordance with Parliamentary practice, and tell how you are coming along with your club work, the trials you have had, the difficulties overcome. You grow in personality and knowledge of polite behavior when you associate with others of the club group in song and play and social conversation and other activities.

It's real growth and education when you take part in club committee work, make a report, cooperate with others, take part in club camps, go on nature hikes and actually do the thousand and one things that go along with the real work of the 4-H clubs to add interest and adventure and culture to it. That is what 4-H Club work means -- real training.

We want again to express our sincerest thanks to the 8,500 extension agents, the 130,000 fine men and women and older club youth who have guided 4-H club work through the year and the million farm fathers and mothers who have helped make 4-H club work what it is today -- the most significant, far-reaching rural movement in all America.

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